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A holistic approach to individualized homoeopathic treatment of insomnia: A case report

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Abstract

Insomnia is a sleep disorder with problems with sleep initiation, duration, consolidation, or quality of sleep manifest for at least three days a week for a minimum of three months. Insomnia affects 10%-30% of people with adverse effect such as sadness, decreased productivity at work, car accidents connected to work, and a general decline in quality of life. Conventional management of insomnia include the behavioural intervention but it is associated with some adverse health effects. Homoeopathy is alternative medical approach that treats the body and mind as one unit and prescribes modest doses of totality-based medication, which eliminates undesired side effects.

Case summary: This case report presents the successful homoeopathic management of insomnia in a 45-year-old lady who complained of insomnia since last 1 year. The case was repertorised according to Homoeopathic literature and medicine *Ignatia Amara* was prescribed in 1M potency. Individualized homoeopathic treatment resulted in significant improvement in insomnia symptoms and overall well-being, where patient reported improvement of symptoms and significant reduction in insomnia severity index score from 22 to 5 in 6 months of individualised homoeopathic treatment highlighting the potential of homeopathy as an alternative therapy for insomnia.

Keywords: Homoeopathy, Individualisation, Insomnia, Insomnia severity index

Introduction

A sleep condition called insomnia is characterised by insufficient quantity or quality of sleep, defined as a subjective report of problems with sleep initiation, duration, consolidation, or quality that persists for at least one month and causes in some sort of impairment throughout the day despite having ample opportunity for sleep^[1]. In order to satisfy the requirements for either persistent insomnia under the Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, 5th edition (DSM-5) or chronic insomnia under the International classification of sleep disorders-third edition (ICSD-3), symptoms need to manifest for at least three days a week for a minimum of three months. The same criteria apply to insomnia that is short-term or episodic and lasts for less than three months^[2, 3].

Insomnia affects 10%-30% of people globally, according to several research, with some estimates reaching 50%-60%. It is more frequent in women, elderly folks, and those with mental and physical health issues. Significant negative effects of insomnia include sadness, decreased productivity at work, car accidents connected to work, and a general decline in quality of life^[4-9].

Clinical assessment of insomnia is time consuming and it can be achieved using questionnaire and sleep diaries. Brief and valid insomnia assessment questionnaire help in formal screening of insomnia. Diagnosis is quicker and it is sound. Insomnia Severity Index (ISI) is a brief questionnaire to assess the severity of insomnia^[10].

Conventional management of insomnia include the behavioural intervention, such as stimulus control therapy or relaxation therapy as initial approach^[11]. First line treatment includes commonly prescribed Benzodiazepines and Non-benzodiazepine hypnotics like zopiclone, zolpidem, and zaleplon. However, adverse effects, such as headaches, drowsiness, coordination loss, and decreased sexual desire are reported in patients. Tricyclic antidepressants like amitriptyline, doxepin, and nortriptyline are used in low dose but may have anticholinergic effects and cardiac conduction prolongation^[12, 13].

Insomnia Severity Index

The Insomnia Severity Index has seven questions. The seven answers are added up to get a total score. For each question, patients CIRCLE the number that best describes their answer for the last 1 month of insomnia problem.

Scoring/Interpretation of ISI score

Add the scores for all seven items (Questions 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7) = ___ your total score Total score categories:

0-7 = No clinically significant insomnia

8-14 = Subthreshold insomnia

15-21 = Clinical insomnia (moderate severity)

22-28 = Clinical insomnia (severe)

Homoeopathy is alternative medical approach that treats the body and mind as one unit and prescribes modest doses of totality-based medication, which eliminates undesired side effects. Homoeopathic medicines have successfully treated of various psychological disorder the presented case report shows the utility of individualised homoeopathic medicine in the treatment of insomnia.

Case report

A lady 45 years of age visited the outdoor patient department of State Lal Bahadur Shastri Homoeopathic College on 28 march 2022 with complaint of loss of sleep since last 1 year. There was difficulty in falling asleep, she woke up 2-3 time at night from sleep. Once awakened, it was difficult for her to fall asleep again. In case of any emotional disturbance occurred, complaints got aggravated.

History

Her complain start after death of her 12-year-old daughter as she met with an accident. Along with this, she had pain in her leg with bursting sensation and aggravation at night. The pain also disturbed her sleep. There was loss of appetite with nausea feeling along with bloating. She had taken allopathic treatment for loss of sleep (Alprazolam 0.25mg if necessary).

Family history

Maternal - Insomnia

Paternal - Hypertension

Personal History

Occupation - Housewife

Obstetric history - P₃L₃A₀

Physical General

Thermal - Chilly

Thirst - Thirsty

Appetite - Salty, spicy

Perspiration - Profuse sweat

Sleep - Sleep latency increase, disturbed sleep

Position - Lying on side with arm under head

Urine - Recurrent UTI history

Stool - Hard constipated

Side - Left

Sensitivity

Aggravation - On exposure to Sun where is aggravation in headache

Light - Sensitive to light unable to sleep if remain on

Noise - Sensitive noise

Odour - Nausea by strong odour

Weather change - No specific change

Mental General

The patient had guilt of her daughter's death as she met with an accident while returning to home. Daily she went to pick her daughter from the school on that day she got late and her daughter was returning to home by herself, on her way, she met with an accident and on spot she died. This incidence developed guilt in her, she felt that because of her fault she lost her daughter if she had performed her responsibility well her daughter would be alive. Since then, she dwells on this incident, and reproaches herself.

She wanted to be left alone and she had consolation aggravation. She worried about her kid's health and had fear of some misfortune, she always thought that she was very unfortunate, who only have troubles in her life.

Case analysis and repertorization

Case was taken as per homoeopathic principles. Patient was asked to fill the ISI questionnaire at the first visit. ISI score calculated was 22 which comes under severe clinical insomnia. Analysis and evaluation of symptoms was done and totality of symptoms was constructed and repertorization was done using complete repertory from zomeo pro software. Below mentioned symptoms was analyzed and evaluated for repertorization.

Symptoms	Rubric	Intensity
Complaint after death of daughter	Ailment from death of loved one	++
Guilt feeling	Reproaching himself	+++
She Felt she did not perform her responsibility	Delusion neglected her duty	++
Difficulty in falling asleep due to grief	Sleeplessness from grief	+++
She Sleep lying on arm under head	Sleep position arm and hand under head	++

Repertorial Result and Prescription

After repertorization, *Ignatia Amara*, Aurum metallicum, Natrum muriaticum, Arsenic album, Pulsatilla and Nux vomica were the top medicine covering minimum of three

symptoms. Only *Ignatia Amara* was covering the all symptoms. After referring from Materia *Ignatia Amara* was selected. *Ignatia Amara* 1M one dose early morning empty stomach was prescribed along with placebo thrice a day.

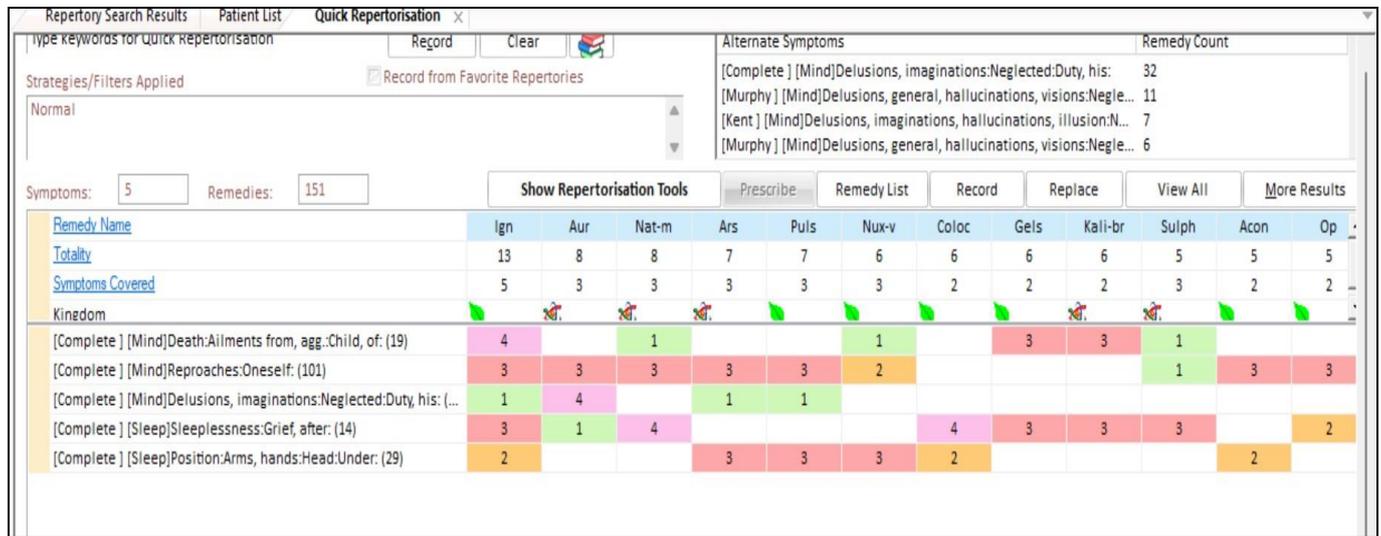


Fig 1: Repertorial analysis

Follow-Up Sheet

S. No.	Date	Brief Notes	Prescription
1.	12.04.2022	Slight improvement in sleep Indigestion and bloating get better Pain of calf muscle is reduced a little	S.L. 30, TDS Cont.
2.	26.04.2022	Slightly improvement in sleep Appetite got better Pain of calf muscle is reduced little bit	S.L. 30, TDS* Cont.
3.	25.05.2022	All problem got better but since last few days she relapsed.	IGNATIA 1M one dose repeated S.L30, TDS* Cont.
4.	23.06.2022	Now she easily falls asleep & quality of sleep was better Gastric trouble improved Pain of calf muscle much better	S.L30, TDS* Cont.
5.	25.07.2022	Fall asleep easily & quality of sleep is better No gastric trouble Calf pain improved	S.L30, TDS* Cont.
6.	23.08.2022	Marked improvement in quality of sleep Calf pain improved	S.L30, TDS* Cont.
7.	23.09.2022	Patient felt better overall and no new complaint was present.	S.L30, TDS*Cont.a

Assessment of improvement and outcome

Assessment was done using ISI score and improvement in general wellbeing of the patient and relief in severity of symptoms. The initial ISI score recorded was 22. Patient reported improvement in symptoms after administration of *Ignatia Amara* 1M. During follow up few symptoms got worse; thus, the medicine was repeated once in same potency followed by placebo. After 6 months of treatment patient was feeling better with no new complain. The ISI score was recorded again which was found to be 5 this time showing significant clinical improvement.

Discussion

The above case report shows that homoeopathic medicines are helpful in the treatment of insomnia. In this case, *Ignatia Amara* in 1M potencies was prescribed, which covered the totality of symptoms of the patient and it has shown positive

results. Insomnia was main symptom in this case, gradually the episodes of insomnia were reduced and presently there is absolute absence of such episodes. Improvement status of the patient was assessed on the basis of insomnia severity index (ISI) score. The initial ISI score on begging of the treatment was 22 which was reduced to 5 after 6 months of individualised homoeopathic treatment.

This case report demonstrates the role of single individualized medicine *Ignatia Amara* in the treatment of insomnia. In homoeopathic system of medicine, sick man comes prior the sick body. Homoeopathy treats the man not the disease. In this case the important mental general like reproaching himself, ailment from death of loved one and delusion neglected her duty, particular general sleeplessness from grief were the important symptoms in the selection of medicine.

INSOMNIA SEVERITY INDEX					
THIS SECTION FOR USE BY STUDY PERSONNEL ONLY.					
Questionnaire completed on visit date <input type="checkbox"/> or specify date completed: 23/09/2022					
Only the patient (subject) should enter information onto this questionnaire.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each question below, please circle the number corresponding most accurately to your sleep patterns in the LAST MONTH. For the first three questions, please rate the SEVERITY of your sleep difficulties. 					
1. Difficulty falling asleep:	None 0	Mild 1	Moderate 2	Severe 3	Very Severe 4
2. Difficulty staying asleep:	None 0	Mild 1	Moderate 2	Severe 3	Very Severe 4
3. Problem waking up too early in the morning:	None 0	Mild 1	Moderate 2	Severe 3	Very Severe 4
4. How SATISFIED /dissatisfied are you with your current sleep pattern?	Very Satisfied 0	Satisfied 1	Neutral 2	Dissatisfied 3	Very Dissatisfied 4
5. To what extent do you consider your sleep problem to INTERFERE with your daily functioning (e.g., daytime fatigue, ability to function at work/daily household tasks, concentration, memory, mood)?	Not at all Interfering 0	A Little Interfering 1	Somewhat Interfering 2	Much Interfering 3	Very Much Interfering 4
6. How much do you think your sleeping problem is NOTICEABLE by others considering it has affected the quality of your life?	Not at all Noticeable 0	A Little Noticeable 1	Somewhat Noticeable 2	Much Noticeable 3	Very Much Noticeable 4
7. How WORRIED /distressed are you about your current sleep problem?	Not at all 0	A Little 1	Somewhat 2	Much 3	Very Much 4
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Fig 2: Shows severity of insomnia at first visit

INSOMNIA SEVERITY INDEX					
THIS SECTION FOR USE BY STUDY PERSONNEL ONLY.					
Questionnaire completed on visit date <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or specify date completed: 26/03/2022					
Only the patient (subject) should enter information onto this questionnaire.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each question below, please circle the number corresponding most accurately to your sleep patterns in the LAST MONTH. For the first three questions, please rate the SEVERITY of your sleep difficulties. 					
1. Difficulty falling asleep:	None 0	Mild 1	Moderate 2	Severe 3	Very Severe 4
2. Difficulty staying asleep:	None 0	Mild 1	Moderate 2	Severe 3	Very Severe 4
3. Problem waking up too early in the morning:	None 0	Mild 1	Moderate 2	Severe 3	Very Severe 4
4. How SATISFIED /dissatisfied are you with your current sleep pattern?	Very Satisfied 0	Satisfied 1	Neutral 2	Dissatisfied 3	Very Dissatisfied 4
5. To what extent do you consider your sleep problem to INTERFERE with your daily functioning (e.g., daytime fatigue, ability to function at work/daily household tasks, concentration, memory, mood)?	Not at all Interfering 0	A Little Interfering 1	Somewhat Interfering 2	Much Interfering 3	Very Much Interfering 4
6. How much do you think your sleeping problem is NOTICEABLE by others considering it has affected the quality of your life?	Not at all Noticeable 0	A Little Noticeable 1	Somewhat Noticeable 2	Much Noticeable 3	Very Much Noticeable 4
7. How WORRIED /distressed are you about your current sleep problem?	Not at all 0	A Little 1	Somewhat 2	Much 3	Very Much 4
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Fig 3: Shows severity of insomnia at 6 months of individualised homoeopathic treatment

Conclusion

The presented case report demonstrates the role of individualised Homoeopathic medicine in treatment of insomnia. The result shows the improvement of symptoms of patient and decrease in the severity of Insomnia when assessed using insomnia severity index score. The outcome of this case will help in further research and management of insomnia using homoeopathy.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

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